

The Dutch specimens did not show wear or abrasion in the plumage, nor were there other signs in appearance or behaviour of the birds having been in captivity, and living specimens in captivity are not known in Holland. This makes it almost certain that they were not escaped cage birds.

Mr. J. A. Smith (*British Birds* Rarities Committee) kindly gave us information concerning representatives of the species up till now found in the British Isles:

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| 18th May, 1909: | 1 ♂ shot at Flannan Islands, Scotland. |
| 19th May, 1961: | 1 specimen observed at Needs, Oar Point, near Beaulieu, Hampshire. |
| 17th June, 1965: | 1 captured at Walney, Lancashire. |
| 21st October, 1967: | 1 caught and seen between 15th October and 7th November, 1967, at Bardsey. |

Regarding this last bird, observed in England during about the same period as the birds found in Holland, Mr. Smith gives the following particulars: "The bird at Bardsey was first seen on 15th October, 1967, trapped on 21st October and last seen on 7th November and in its first year plumage. Like your birds it showed no signs of wear or abrasion on its plumage. Enquiries recently made into the question of escapes show that few are kept in captivity and no escapes are known. The record has been accepted by the Rarities Committee."

In addition Mr. Smith writes: "Quite a lot of American birds were recorded last autumn and it does not seem likely that this British record would relate to the same birds as those trapped in your country. Whether or not these birds received some assistance by ship on passage can probably never be determined, but many of these birds that came over last autumn are of species which could not have been assisted in this matter."

British observations during the autumn of 1967 of seven American bird species, all except one from October, is reported in *British Birds* (60, 1967: 536). The present authors are of the opinion that both specimens captured in the Netherlands form a strong indication that some of these American migrants reached continental Europe.

The birds, which seem to be the first known from Europe's mainland, are still alive and thriving in captivity; when they die one will be presented to the Leiden Museum, the second to the British Museum of Natural History. The photographs illustrating this communication were taken shortly after the birds had been trapped.

We thank Mr. J. A. Smith of *British Birds* Rarities Committee and thanks are also due to Dr. G. F. Mees of the Museum of Natural History at Leiden for loaning us some skins for comparison.

Falco concolor Temminck in South Africa

by P. A. Clancey

Received 21st August, 1968

Vaurie (*Birds Palearctic Fauna*, 2, 1965: 227) gives the breeding range of the uncommon Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor* as north-eastern Africa from eastern Libya to the Nile Delta (thence further east to the Dead Sea Depression), south to the Sudan, the islands in the southern Red Sea, and Somalia; formerly to Mombasa, in Kenya. The species is migratory, spending the non-breeding season in eastern Africa (Lake Victoria and northern Mozambique), Madagascar, and Mauritius. Information recently assembled by the

Durban Museum shows that the species ranges further south than indicated by Vaurie's account, to reach south-eastern Africa (Natal).

A sub-adult falcon shot at Tongaat, on the Natal North Coast, on 13th December, 1961, was received at the Durban Museum on the following day, when it was identified provisionally as a young Hobby *Falco subbuteo*, though it was noted that it was light grey on the upper parts and the ventral streaking was grey rather than black. At that time this was attributed to possible geographical variation in the young of various *F. subbuteo* populations. The bird was sexed as a ♂; the wing measures 276 and the tail 134 mm. A second falcon, very similar to the 1961 specimen, was received at the Museum on the 13th March, 1967, having been picked up near Durban with a serious (? gunshot) injury to one wing. The bird was a ♂, and the wing 276 and the tail 128.5 mm. Again, the light grey upper parts and grey ventral streaking were noted. On comparing these two birds against the characters given for the juvenal stages of *F. subbuteo* and other small *Falco* spp. in Swann (*Monograph Birds of Prey*, 2, 1936: 353), it was decided that they agreed more or less precisely with those of the juvenal of the Sooty Falcon, differing substantially from the described young of *F. subbuteo* and *F. eleonorae*, the only other two species of comparable proportions known to or likely to occur in south-eastern Africa. As no identified material of *F. concolor* was available in South African museums to confirm the determination, the 1967 specimen was submitted to the Bird Room, British Museum (Nat. Hist.), London, where its identification as a young example of the Sooty Falcon was kindly confirmed by Mrs. B. P. Hall and Mr. Derek Goodwin.

These two records of *F. concolor* from Natal add a new species to the South African list, and throw much additional light on the wintering range of this generally uncommon falcon. It is recorded as being present on Madagascar between November and April. That the south-eastern African littoral may also be a major hibernal area for the Sooty Falcon is lent further support by a visual record of a black falcon made by me in the Botanic Gardens, Durban, on 26th December, 1960. This bird was located perching on a bare branch of a gum tree (*Eucalyptus* sp.), and was being mobbed by Drongos *Dicrurus adsimilis* and other birds. It allowed a close approach, and viewed from below appeared to be wholly sooty black, the breast with a greyish wash, the cere, gape and feet bright lemon yellow. On taking to wing, the bird was seen to have the flight-silhouette of a Hobby. It was noted as not being attributable to any of the birds of prey then known to occur in South Africa, and its identity was left undecided. On the basis of the field characters and the existence of identified specimen material of *F. concolor* now available from the same general area, the 1960 sight record was almost certainly of a fully adult example of the Sooty Falcon.

I am grateful to Mrs. B. P. Hall and Mr. Derek Goodwin, of the Bird Room, British Museum, for their kind help in this inquiry.

Apus berliozi Ripley, its races and siblings

by R. K. Brooke

Received 13th July, 1968

There is in the United States National Museum a series of an *Apus* swift collected by A. D. Forbes-Watson on the south-east coast of Kenya in early December 1964 and late January 1966 which is similar in size and markings to *Apus pallidus berliozi* Ripley (1965) but is darker and averages somewhat